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CRITICISMS AND DISCUSSIONS.

A REVIEW OF DR. CARUS' "FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS" AND "THE SURD OF METAPHYSICS."¹

THESE two volumes may be presumed to give a fairly satisfactory account of Dr. Carus' philosophy. His writings are voluminous, but it is fair to assume that his other books are either an explication or an application of the philosophical principles here set forth. And this assumption is justified in that the former of these two volumes purports to be and actually is a careful treatise upon the great themes of philosophy, while the latter, although directed to a specific point in metaphysical inquiry, serves to present more fully and clearly the author's views upon the fundamental questions involved; so that we have here, in a nutshell, the Philosophy of *The Open Court*. This is notwithstanding what is told us in the Preface to the *Fundamental Problems*, namely, that nearly the whole of its contents first appeared as editorial articles in *The Open Court*. A glance at the Table of Contents reveals not only a general connection between the essays, but also a substantial identity of theme and even a logical consecutiveness and harmony in the treatment of it.

The author is a man of no merely amateur accomplishments in the arena of dialectical thought and discussion. He has convictions of his own and he is not wanting in courage or ability to enforce them. He disclaims originality or, more accurately, he affirms his endeavor to avoid it. In this, whatever his own modesty may lead him to declare, it will hardly be unjust to charge him with some measure of failure.

It may be more surprising to the savants of the opening century that a new and somewhat original philosophy should come out of the utilitarian and Mammon-worshipping city of Chicago than it was to them of old time that any good thing should come out of Nazareth; but in both instances the thing which surprises is the thing that comes to pass. Dr. Paul Carus is the brilliant author and persistent proponent of this new philosophy. It is neither possible nor desirable to set forth in full its postulates and principles

¹*The Princeton Theological Review*. MacCalla & Company, Philadelphia.

in this review, and yet, as all theology banks up against philosophy, and as this system—in so far true to the philosophical instinct and necessity—explicitly invades the realm of religious thought and ethical motive, we may examine the elements of this American positivism for the sake of its placement in the general scheme of modern philosophical encyclopædia, and of learning what are not only its alleged but also its logical and implicit bearings upon the intellectual elements of the Christian religion.

Dr. Carus conceives the problem of philosophy to be "the arrangement of all knowledge into one harmonious system which will be a unitary conception of the world and can serve as a basis for ethics" (i, 7)¹ He admits that his Monism differs from other philosophies in this, that it "is not a finished system but a plan for a system" (i, 24). The unitary conception is the goal of philosophy. This conception presupposes the idea of the continuity of nature which, however, he significantly says, "has not yet been proved in all its details" (i, 7). This unity of Reality must be unqualifiedly accepted. It is true in thought because it is true in fact. This conception is grounded on positive facts, and therefore the system is called "Positivism"—a term which, although he adopts it, he cannot accept with the connotation of M. Auguste Comte, who introduced it. Facts are ultimates; they are equally real or equally unreal. "Monism" also designates this philosophy of the unitary conception. But this Monism is not a "one substance theory;" Spinoza's doctrine was a pseudo-Monism, a "Henism." The author is Hegelian enough to tell us that Monism is a "recognition of dualities and their reconciliation in higher unities" (ii, 76, 77). Idealism affirms spirit only and Realism affirms matter only, whereas in truth both spirit and matter are mere abstracts and neither exists. True Monism recognizes the oneness of All-Existence. There are no differences of kind in this One; no Creator and created, no supernatural and natural, no divine and human. God and the universe are One. All nature is alive. Haeckel says that all nature has intelligence; this is "panpsychism." Carus says all nature is alive or has the capacity to live; this is "panbiotism" (ii, 170). Life is an immanent property of matter. There is organic life and inorganic life; the former no doubt originated in the latter. But the barrier between them has been broken down by modern thought, and life is now recognized as a fundamental property of matter; indeed, "it must be eternal" (i, 111). Reality is indivisible; the most important abstracts are matter, force and form—these three, but the greatest of these is form.

Epistemologically stated, all knowledge has its root in sensation and sensation is primarily feeling and not choice, as Professor Romanes believed. Feeling is fundamental and the *rationale* of feeling is purely biological. In

¹For convenience in reference, I indicate the first volume named at the beginning as volume i and the second as volume as ii.

the development of knowledge from feeling the conditioning factor is memory, and this memory is nothing more than the psychological aspect of certain preserved physiological forms in sentient substance (i, 12). Constant special irritation has created special senses; the unity of consciousness is the product of the whole organism and the soul is not an entity; it is not a separate or separable independent something; it is only "the psychical aspect of all the organic forms of our body" (i, 14). The old ego-centric psychology is abandoned and the new is accepted, which regards "the center of consciousness as the strongest feeling at a given time which as such naturally predominates over and eclipses the other feelings of the organism" (ii, 195).

Metaphysically stated, the ultimate category of thought is to be found in the laws of form. These are eternal, irrefragable and everywhere the same. They are always "*correct, i. e., the truths of formal thought, but they are not always real, i. e., the truths of a well-ascertained experience*" (i, 69). The real is not a necessary existence; but if it do exist, then it must exist in accordance with these laws of form. The ultimate of thought is not any thing-in-itself, but forms-in-themselves.

Kant nodded in overlooking the essential difference between the subjective and the ideal, and the consequent confusion weakens the very foundations of his system. The ideal belongs to the realm of ideas and is therefore metaphysically eternal; the subjective belongs only to the realm of the thinking or feeling agent, and is therefore psychologically variable. Kant distinguishes between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* correctly enough, but he attributes the former only to subjectivity; and, whereas he erroneously makes the subjective equivalent to the ideal, the truth is that the infinitely important part of the subjective of Kant, namely, the ideal as correctly conceived, is preëminently, if not exclusively, entitled to the honors of the *a priori*. For, indeed, from the evolutionistic and Monistic point of view the subjective is really not *a priori* in any correct sense at all, seeing that it pertains simply to the perceiving or the conceiving subject; and to us men this subject, this soul or mind or ego or what-not, is only a fragment or moment of the Great All-One. Man, like charcoal, is simply "transformed solar heat;" and "mind is not something different from the world, but must be considered as its product and highest efflorescence" (ii, 22). Hence Kant was wrong in regarding the mind as able actively to import forms into phenomena; these mind-forms or categories of thought are only a reflection of the forms of objective existence, preserved in the plastic but ceaselessly crystallizing sentient substance. The subjective *a priori* is liable to all the mutations and fluctuations of a psychological experience; the ideal *a priori*, which is Dr. Carus' *a priori*, resides in these eternal, imperial, immanent and even "supernatural" (ii, 87) laws of form.

So much may serve imperfectly to give to one unfamiliar with this philosophy a rough but true conception of its teachings and tendencies. Its author argues for its truth very earnestly and sometimes with much force. In the course of his arguments he says many things which are both excellent and true, but we are now dealing, not with detached thoughts in his system, but with the system itself.

Dr. Carus frankly acknowledges his indebtedness to Kant. He regards his own position as the natural outcome of the critical philosophy, but not without very important differences. He calls it Kantism developed, broadened, matured and adapted to our time. "It is a protest against the halfness of agnosticism and a rejection of the perverted ethics of hedonism" (i, vi). Both intellectual and ethical excellences are claimed in its behalf. It "means perspicuous simplicity. It is the systematic and clear conception of an intelligible reality." It is the "classical philosophy" (i, 251). Materialism invariably leads to hedonism or utilitarianism; spiritualism or idealism leads to asceticism; but this classical philosophy "finds the purpose of existence in the constant aspiration of realizing a higher and better, a nobler and more beautiful state of existence" (i, 189). In short, it is a new gospel not only for the philosopher in his search for truth, but also for the people in their chase for happiness and fulness of life.

All this is promising, but what is to be expected in the performance? Is this new occidental philosophy pagan or Christian? Does it square well or ill with the things most surely believed throughout the Church of God? Does it ring true or false to what Christendom reveres as the Word of God, and does it acknowledge or regard the fundamental elements of Christianity?

In finding its theological and religious valuation, we have two methods within our reach. We may take the plain utterances of the author himself as bearing upon our inquiry, or we may take his system and decide upon it for ourselves.

For himself, the author, while claiming everything for his philosophy, frankly affirms his radical break with evangelical Christianity. He tells us that he does *not* persist in calling himself a Christian, although to a great extent he gladly accepts Christ's ethics. He regards Christ and Christianity as radically different. He seeks the direct revelation of God in the facts of life and solemnly warns us that "the surrender of science is the way to perdition." If theism is identical with supernaturalism—and it certainly is—then he tells us that he must beg to be classed among the atheists. There is no disputing the correctness of this classification; and, as a confession of faith, we have here enough to place Dr. Carus among the Philistines.

But, passing by the teacher, let us look into his teaching to see whither it tends, theologically. The bottom postulate of a philosophy correlates with the theistic conception in theology. Dr. Carus' final postulate is the "Laws of

Form." Metaphysically, this foundation hangs in midair. Every impulse of the modern philosophical spirit, crying out for the ultimate personality, is ignored and repulsed. We fail to see wherein the positing of these eternal laws has a single advantage in the search for a metaphysical *terra firma*; and certainly the considerations which have brought the sanest and strongest of the accredited philosophers in Christendom, especially in recent times, to acknowledge personality as the highest note and final category of our thinking are, metaphysically regarded, incomparably to be preferred. But with Dr. Carus these laws are God. "By God we understand the order of the world that makes harmony, evolution, aspiration and morality possible" (i, 152). He conceives God to be not less than a person, but more; and yet, building perhaps more consistently than he intended, he calls God "it" and not "Him." The conception of God as a person is poetry, not science. These eternal laws "possess all those qualities which a pious reflection has attributed to God" (see i, p. 54). The Cosmos, which is the One, which is God, is the foundation of morality. "We may compare it to a father and with Christ call it 'Our Father,' just as well as we like to speak of Mother Nature" (i, 323). But it must be remembered that this is only a simile which, if carried out, would lead to serious misapprehension.

This is not exactly the theism of the decalogue. Monism is monotheism, but wait to hear what kind of monotheism it is: "God is not one in number, but one in kind. He is unique. To believe in one God, as opposed to several Gods, is a pagan view which is more advanced than polytheism, but remains upon the same level" (ii, 155, 156). Monism revises the second word of the law and tells us that even as we shall not bow down ourselves to graven images nor serve them, so also we shall not bow down before the true God which is the All-in-All to worship it. "We do not call the All God in order to bow down into the dust and to adore it. We regard adoration as a pagan custom which, it is a pity, survived in Christianity" (i, 261). This is a consistent corollary, it is true; but it is the consistency of a deliberate and downright twentieth century paganism, which not only would smash the shrines of all creeds and cults, but also would throttle the very instinct of religion in man, which leads him upward toward his God. Religion is only man's aspiration to be in harmony with the All; it matters not how well he succeeds; it matters not that, whatever he is or becomes or does, he is still, in spite of himself, a part of the All; only let him *aspire*, and that is the Alpha and Omega of religion.

Nor is this new Positivism less advanced in its doctrine of Man. *Talis Deus, qualis homo*. Man is the flower of nature—not even its fruit. Mr. Edison says that, in its own little way, the atom is everything that man is. Dr. Carus agrees, and yet the atom itself is but a convenient scientific fiction. The ego is no entity. Memory produces selfhood, not *vice versa*. Person-

ality is the symbolical thread on which are strung the beads of our existence. The ideas which live in us constitute the self. Abstract thought helped to make man man; but, pray, how could it help to "make" him man, seeing that he must needs be man before he could be helped by it? Truth is relation; if it has any meaning, it is correct cognition. Man is the child of the cosmic past; but the Cosmos is the All-God; therefore, man is the son of God. As a rational being "man's begetter is not his brute progenitor, but the eternal order of the universe" (ii, 224, 225). This is fatalism stripped of every shred of the idea of providence or plan or personality. Such an anthropology is quickly self-interpreting. Man is but a coördinating factor in the living All. Atoms are centers of living spontaneity. There is no push or pull of gravity from without; all nature lives. This all-pervading spontaneity comes to the front in God-like beauty in the moral character of man. But he is dust and only dust; into dust he need not return, for only dust he ever is. "Christ's words are literally true when he says, 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham'" (ii, 54). Any doctrine of man which makes his soul to consist only of a series of successive states, whether taught by Emons or Spencer or Dr. Carus, takes away the franchise for any intelligent notion of immortality which involves a continual personal existence and consciousness after death, and so does violence not only to the Christian religion, but also to the highest extra-Christian faiths of mankind.

But it is needless to compass all sides of this pretentious philosophy. The touchstone of any system of thought is to be found in its attitude toward theism. Its teachings must have either a direct or an indirect theological reference. Not that the philosopher must wait with a "By your leave" for the theologian; but the theologian must find room for himself within the pale of a philosophy or he forthwith declines to abide there.

The principles of this Positivism are a direct negation of many of the most elementary truths of Christianity. Its unitary conception is not the unity of truth, but the essential kinship, the identity of the All; the oneness of the whole enclosing circumference of reality, together with all that it encloses. It is Pantheism robbed of its mystical adorations and its confessedly somewhat redeeming features. It is Cosmism, scorning the more and more generous conceptions to Christianity of the lamented author of *The Outlines of the Cosmic Philosophy*. It is not so far from Comte's Positivism as it imagines; for it regards with patient and patronizing complacency the crude anthropomorphisms and excrescences of mankind's present religious state, remembering that mythology is ever an indispensable ladder to be climbed in making the difficult ascent to truth.

Dr. Carus is at no pains to make his peace with evangelical theology. He has chosen his own way, but he will never win the thought or the heart of humanity. His philosophy will be accurately classed as atheistic, and athe-

ism is false philosophy. To make God One with the Cosmos is, to an ardent scientist who makes the way of science the way of life and the surrender of science the way of death, not acosmism, as Spinoza, the God-intoxicated man, would hold it, but atheism, as the world-intoxicated scientist is bound to hold it in the end. For the human mind is not ingenious enough to be able to hold consistently the same thing as God and the world. Its faith becomes either atheistic pancosmism or pantheistic acosmism. However successful Spinoza was in holding consistently to the latter, this new philosophy, with its commendable but overstated loyalty to empirical science, is essentially the former, pure and simple.

The merit of this philosophy is that it wears no disguise. It spurns the idea of the unknowable and truly argues that all that exists is capable of being known. Like all other implicitly atheistic systems, it is inconsistent enough to substitute eternal law for God and the Cosmos for the basis of the indispensable authority in religion and in ethics. It withholds Mr. Spencer's patronizing but inconsistent sop to the superstitions of the religious and coldly bids men, since there is nothing adorable to adore, to cease from the pagan folly of adoration. This forbids all worship of God; and why not? for there is no God such as men could worship. The Great Teacher said to the woman of Samaria: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The voice of the new Positivism, speaking forth from the shores of Lake Michigan, says: "Spirit is not a substance; spirit is the significance of words;" and, again, "Adoration is a pagan custom which, it is a pity, survived in Christianity."

TRENTON.

HENRY COLLIN MINTON.

THE GOD OF SCIENCE.

IN REPLY TO REV. HENRY COLLIN MINTON.

AMONG recent reviews of my works, a criticism of *Fundamental Problems* and *The Surd of Metaphysics* by Rev. Henry Collin Minton of Trenton, which appeared in *The Princeton Theological Review*, is distinguished by fairness and gives upon the whole a correct statement of my views; yet it contains at the same time a vigorous denunciation of my philosophy as atheistic and hostile to Christianity, if not to religion in general, I wish to submit the case to all who are inclined to agree with Mr. Minton for reconsideration, and, in order to let readers of *The Monist* judge for themselves, I take pleasure in reprinting his review in its entirety, and will limit my answer only to the most important point at issue—the objection of atheism.

Mr. Minton overlooks the distinction made by me, between Determinism and Fatalism; he claims that I say "Man is dust and only dust; unto dust he need not return, for only dust he ever was." Obviously, Mr. Minton mixes me up (strange though it may seem) with Yahveh, the God of the